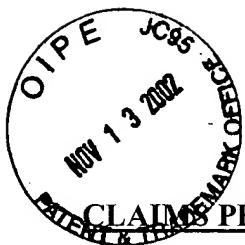


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CLAIMS PENDING AFTER AMENDMENT OF NOVEMBER 13, 2002

Serial No. 09/297,399

1. (Five Times Amended) A water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen which comprises a thickener which is associative and swells in an alkaline medium, said thickener comprising a polymer having a carboxyl group and a hydrophobic group selected from the group consisting of a linear hydrocarbon, a halogenated alkyl, an organosilicon group, and a fluorinated carbon group, a pigment whose particles are subjected to surface treatment with a water soluble polymer and a surfactant, a polar solvent comprising water and other water-miscible solvents and a pH controlling agent.

2. (Amended) The water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen as described in claim 1, wherein the thickener is contained in a proportion of 0.1 to 8% by weight based on the ink composition and dissolves and swells in the polar solvent to associate with the particle surface of the pigment, thereby increasing the ink viscosity.

5. The water based ink composition of claim 1, wherein said thickener is present in the amount of 0.1 to 2.0% by weight based on the ink composition.

6. (Twice Amended) The water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen of claim 1 wherein the hydrophobic group is a linear hydrocarbon.

7. (Amended) The water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen of claim 1 wherein the hydrophobic group is a halogenated alkyl.

8. The water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen of claim 1 wherein the hydrophobic group is an organosilicon group.

9. The water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen of claim 1 wherein the hydrophobic group is a fluorinated carbon group.